

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for the careful consideration given the present application. The application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action, and amended as necessary to more clearly and particularly describe the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention.

The Examiner objected to claims 2–4 and 13 as being dependent upon a cancelled claim, claim 2. Applicant assumes the Examiner meant claims 3–4 and 13. Claims 3 and 13 have been amended to overcome the Examiner's objection.

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Yoneno et al., U.S. Pat. No. 5,525,782 in view of Enami, JP 60-174453 or Kikuchi, JP 54-136453.

Enami does not teach the limitations of claim 1 for which it is cited. More specifically, Enami does not teach "a steam supply portion for supplying steam into the heating chamber." Referring to the purpose of the abstract of Enami, the purpose states "[t]o make it possible to carry out heat-cooking of a variety of foods by providing means for heating foods within a hot water tank with microwaves...and means for heating the foods with microwaves while showering hot water onto the foods." The abstract further discloses "[t]he showering heating of the foods is carried out in such a manner that hot water 5' within the hot water tank 5 is flowed to a showering body 16..." Thus, Enami teaches heating the food with hot water, not steam. Therefore, the combined references do not teach all the limitations of claim 1.

Kikuchi does not teach the limitations of claim 1 for which it is cited. More specifically, Kikuchi does not teach "a steam supply portion for supplying steam into the heating chamber located in the lower back portion of the heating chamber." Referring to Figure 4 of Kikuchi, Figure 5 shows a boiler tank located in the rear of the microwave unit. The boiler tank 13,

however, is located behind the heating chamber 5 and not in the lower back portion of the heating chamber. Thus, Kikuchi does not teach a steam supply portion located in the lower back portion of the heating chamber. Therefore, the combined references do not teach all the limitations of claim 1.

Claims 8, 9, 11, 12, 14 and 15 depend either directly or indirectly on claim 1, thus all arguments pertaining to claim 1 are equally applicable to these claims and are herein incorporated by reference.

Yoneno does not teach the limitations of claim 19 for which it is cited. More specifically, Yoneno does not teach “a feed water pipe connecting the feed water tank to the steam supply portion where the feed water pipe further comprises an intermediate portion; and, a heater to heat the water in the intermediate portion.” Referring to Figure 14 and to column 15, line 35 through column 16, line 18 of Yoneno, Yoneno discloses a steam generator 40 having an adsorption unit 53. The adsorption unit is composed of zeolite particles and iron powder mixed with each other. The zeolite particles adsorbs water molecules. The iron powder is induction heated by a heating coil 54 and heats the water molecules with thermal energy so that the water molecules are released as steam. Yoneno further discloses that a control unit controls valves 45 and 47 in order to replace steam in the oven cavity and to discharge steam to the outside or take in air from the outside, see column 15, line 57 through column 16, line 4. Yoneno, thus teaches generating steam internally with an adsorption unit and without a feed water tank or pipe. Thus, Yoneno cannot teach a feed water pipe having an intermediate portion and a heater to heat the intermediate portion. Therefore, the combined references do not teach all the limitations of claim 19.

The Examiner rejected claims 3, 4, 6, 7, 13 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Yoneno et al., U.S. Pat. No. 5,525,782 in view of Kurita et al., U.S. Pat. No.

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6,232,587, as applied to claims 1, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14 and 15 above, and further in view of Kawada,
JP 54-10460.

Claims 3, 4, 6, 7, 13 and 20 depend either directly or indirectly on claim 1, thus all arguments pertaining to claim 1 are equally applicable to these claims and are herein incorporated by reference.

The Examiner rejected claims 5, 10 and 16–18 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Yoneno et al., U.S. Pat. No. 5,525,782 in view of Kurita et al., U.S. Pat. No. 6,232,587, as applied to claims 1, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14 and 15 above, and further in view of Kurita, U.S. Pat. No. 6,232,587.

Claims 5, 10 and 16–18 depend either directly or indirectly on claim 1, thus all arguments pertaining to claim 1 are equally applicable to these claims and are herein incorporated by reference.

If there are any additional fees resulting from this communication, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 16-0820, our Order No. 36549.

Respectfully submitted,
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